

V. I. Lenin

The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. (B.)

April 24–29 (May 7–12), 1917

Speech on the Plan to Convene an International Socialist Conference^{1}

April 25 (May 8)

Variant of Minutes

I do not agree with the previous speaker.

In Borgbjerg's proposal we have a political fact of exceptional importance which imposes on us the duty of exposing the social-chauvinists and launching a political campaign. The British and French "socialists" have rejected Borgbjerg's proposal. The British and French Plekhanovs are not coming to this conference. Borgbjerg's proposals are a farce. Through Borgbjerg, the German social-chauvinists are offering their terms for peace. They are doing this through a socialist in order to cover up their social-chauvinist intrigue. This must be exposed, to discourage them from ever again applying to the socialist parties.

There can be no doubt at all that this is a proposal coming from the German Government, which is acting through its own social-chauvinists. It is the one that is arranging this congress.... It cannot do so openly, and is therefore doing it through its own Plekhanovs. By this diplomatic step the German Government sheds all responsibility while propounding through them its secret hopes. Let me read you a report in a foreign paper about Borgbjerg: "Through a Danish social-chauvinist, the German Kaiser wants to call a peace conference in his own interests." Borgbjerg's proposal is clearly nothing but a fraud and a swindle. Then we have a report from *Rabochaya Gazeta*^{2} (*Reads out the report from "Rabochaya Gazeta" of April 25, 1917.*) It is beyond doubt, therefore, that this is a proposal from the German Government. That is how such things are done. It is our task to expose the inner workings of this to the world, i.e., pass a detailed resolution, translate it into several languages and publish it in all the papers. I move a draft resolution.

It is a curious fact that the capitalist newspapers are maintaining a diplomatic silence. They know the rule, that speech is silver and silence is golden. The bourgeois newspapers know what the whole thing is about. Newspapers like *Rabochaya Gazeta* are at a loss. *Yedinstvo*^[3] alone has said that Borgbjerg is an agent of the German Government. But by saying in the next breath that neither the British nor the French social-chauvinists, nor the Russian Plekhanovs will attend this conference under any circumstances; it exposes the British, French and Russian governments, who, being aware of the really difficult condition of Germany, hope to fill their appetites at her expense. We must expose this comedy of masques. We must tell how such things are done: Bethmann-Hollweg goes to Wilhelm, Wilhelm summons Scheidemann, Scheidemann goes to Denmark, and as a result, Borgbjerg goes to Russia with the peace terms. (*Reads out the resolution.*)

Trier is a Danish Marxist. Denmark is a petty-bourgeois country. Her bourgeoisie has battered on the war and hates the workers. The leaders of the Danish Social-Democratic majority are among the most opportunist in Europe. They have clearly exposed themselves as real social-chauvinists. We, for our part, must be fair and say about Borgbjerg what we have said about Plekhanov. If we hear fine phrases shouted to us about Alsace-Lorraine, we must remember that the whole thing boils down to money. In fact, it is a question of unusually rich ores. It is a question of profit, a peaceful sharing out of the booty between the German and the French capitalists. The Danish internationalists have rejected this. I forgot to say that the Kautskyites have agreed to attend the conference, and this must be exposed. The proposal coming via Borgbjerg says that the German capitalists are bargaining, because they are incapable of holding on to what they have seized. Germany's position is desperate; she is on the brink of ruin. But the German capitalists still hope to retain a bit. The diplomatists have strong bonds with each other, they know everything, everything is clear to them. The people alone are not told such things. The Anglo-French chauvinists have refused to attend the conference because they are very well aware of the real state of affairs. There was good reason for their taking ministerial office. It is now a matter of strangulating and plundering Germany, for she is no longer capable of conducting a policy of aggrandizement. Borgbjerg is an agent of German imperialism. If the soldiers receive this resolution they will understand that it is now a question of squeezing the last breath out of Germany. Congresses are farces attended by social-chauvinist diplomatists. There is the congress, and in the next room they will be sharing out Alsace-Lorraine. The truth about congresses must be told once and for all; to open the people's eyes. If we adopt this manifesto and have it printed, translated into foreign languages and circulated among the workers and soldiers, they will understand the real state of affairs. This will be a very genuine campaign; it will be a clarification of the proletarian line.

First published in 1958 in the
book *Sedmaya (Aprelskaya)*
Vserossiiskaya konferentsia
R.S.D.R.P.(B.). Petrogradskaya
obshchegorodskaya Konferentsia
R.S.D.R.P.(B.). April 1917 goda.
Protokoly (The seventh [April] All-
Russia Conference of the
R.S.D.L.P.[B.]. The Petrograd city
conference of the R.S.D.L.P.[B.]. April
1917. Minutes)
Printed from the text of the book

From: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/7thconf2/1.htm#v41pp77-409>